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assured, they build houses which may favourably be compared even with those of the poorer Brahmins. Such well-built houses are of mud walls about two feet thick, a tiled roof laid out on bamboo poles and a fairly large courtyard. We found the houses and courtyards in Barela scrupulously clean. Refuse, however, was thrown into the manure pits right alongside the houses. In Kharara Ghat the houses were not of the same standard of cleanliness as in Barela. There seemed to be no particular direction which the houses must face. Enquiries revealed that there was no particular objection to having the door face toward the south. To some Hindus this is the direction of the dwelling place of the God of Death, *Yama*, and there should be no door that way. Most houses seemed to have no central courtyard, such as is common in Santali villages. If two houses face each other, both houses have a courtyard and there is a common pathway between. The mud walls, inside and outside, the floors and the courtyard are plastered with a mixture of cow dung and clay. There is generally but one room in the average house, and it is littered up with many things. There is found somewhere a large sun-dried mud urn, large enough for a man to get into, and in this is stored the grain so that it may not be destroyed by rats and moisture.[1] There are baskets and tools in the corners; on bamboo poles stretched just across the top of the mud walls, not much higher than the head, hang clothes, rags and tattered bedding. In one corner, the view of which is generally hidden as one enters the low door, is the cooking department with its stone mill and *chulhas* and a few pots for cooking purposes. There will be a few bottles for oil, and a few tins, usually old tins once thrown away by some city dweller, in which are kept such things as salt and spices used in the preparation of the meal. This is a description of the better type of house. In summer it is dark and cool. There are no windows and all the light comes through the door leading to a small veranda.

On the other hand, there is the meaner type of house. At Barela there were numbers of these alongside of other better houses. The pictures show the differences.[2] These ruder huts have no veranda space, though usually there is an attempt at a small courtyard. The doors are so low that one has to get on his hands and knees to enter. The roof is of grass, and usually this type of house does not furnish much protection from rain. The walls are merely bamboo *tati* or just branches woven together and protected by thorns. This type of house is airy compared to the others, but the door can never be locked. In-

1 See Plate vii.
2 See Plate v.

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342 raised. An old shoe is also generally found along with the iron and
789 stones under the floor. Occasionally bits of dried *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum*
sanctum) are also scattered about the floor or again a bunch of *tulasi*
[824] may be tied at the base of the central pole. This pole stuck in the centre of the house being built is not a part of the permanent construction, but is a device to render the building work satisfactory and protect the home from demons taking possession of it while in the process of construction. On the pole can be seen hanging a basket and in this basket were found pieces of iron and tin, and bits of the outer *lepoed*[1] covering of another house. It may be taken from the walls of a house in which a happily married and prosperous family lived.
[237] In an earthen pot placed on the floor there was a yellowish liquid. The builder told us that this was water, but it had the appearance of cow's
[778 urine, although this could not be confirmed. Occasionally there is a
782] sign of a little shrine about the construction somewhere, which shows signs of the presentation of the *hom* offering.

342 The inner floor of the house will be filled in and packed down after the walls are up. In dwellings of good construction the floor of the interior of the house should be higher than the veranda floor, and the veranda floor should, in turn, be higher than that of the courtyard. Kol houses have no windows, and the door-ways are low. On entering one must bow, or even get down on hands and knees. Bowing as
[782 one enters is said to be a method of showing respect to the household
788] deities. Windows might let in evil forces, hence none is included.

342 Women may aid in building the house, but their work is limited
462 to assisting in building the walls and floor of the house by bringing the earth or water, mixing them and helping to place the mud in the proper place. They take no part, however, in the construction of the
[562 roof. This is not a woman's job, and for a woman to get upon a roof
784] is taboo—a thing that requires punishment or a fine.

342 Kols are able to construct the whole house. If the roof is to
[824] be of grass, the grass is brought from the forests, and *kusa* (*Poa cynosuroides*) and *duba* (*Agrostis linearis*) are generally used. If
[323] tiles are utilized, cheap country tiles are obtained from the village potter. The Kol puts the tiles on the roof himself. The only
[335] thing which he cannot make is the door and frame, but these may be bought quite cheaply in the markets or may be made for him by the village carpenter. They are set in the opening left for the door, and the mud is packed in about them. There is usually but one door to a house. The more primitive types of houses so common among

1 See Glossary, Appendix VI, for meanings of Vernacular terms.

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412 the lower stone. In the centre there is a pivot around which the upper stone rotates. The *sil* is essentially a grindstone but is used mostly to grind spices, and mix together ingredients on the mortar-and-pestle

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

system. The *sil* has two parts: an oblong stone 18"×12" the surface of which is roughened by being chipped; the roller, a piece of stone which is rounded and which is used something as a rolling pin, only the stone grinds and does not revolve.

An iron knife which is attached to a piece of wood and on which all the cutting of vegetables is done is usually found about the house. The user sits on the floor and cuts [516] the vegetables or meat on the knife. In the process [252] the knife is steadied by pressing the feet on the wooden attachment and thus both hands are free for work.

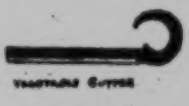

Fig. 8

415 A few baskets will always be found lying about the house. [285] These also are not manufactured by Kols. They are used for transporting things to and from the bazaar, for gathering leaves, sticks and cow-dung for fuel or plaster. Vegetables and the like may be stored in them. The winnowing basket (*supa*) is always found near the granary. This is used to clean the grains and also has its work in certain magical ceremonies which will be described further on. A sort of broom made of bamboo and grass will be found somewhere about the place.

[251] [243]

Fig. 9

412

354 In one corner of the room is located the *chulha*. This is a low mud hearth with one or two fireplaces. The smoke goes into the room. [252] Here the meals for the family are cooked. Nearby are the cooking 412 vessels and an iron spoon or two for stirring the food and some tongs 415 for the fire. Somewhere will be found the large sun-dried mud urn in [251] which the wheat or rice is stored. This is rat proof and is arranged so that it may be watched for termites which do much damage in [237] villages. Some piles of fuel will be seen: dried cow-dung cakes or 462 bits of wood which have been chopped by the men of the family.

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part of one, and if another person should get it he would have power over the child. Its burial is also, strangely, a proof of birth. If a Kol is asked where he was born he replies: "My *nava* is buried in...." and names the village. In a real sense a part of him is buried there and he is a part of that village. The spot is plastered over with a mixture of cow dung, earth and water, and the fire lit over it. The *hom* sacrifice may also be offered. 846 [237 782]

Any extraordinary happening at birth or anything unusual is generally considered a bad sign. For example, a child born with teeth already in its mouth is much feared, for it signifies bad luck and a member of the family, probably one of the parents, will be sure to die within a short time. They say the child has come to destroy a member of the family. An extra finger, though, is considered as a good omen. Twins seem to have no special significance attached to them and their occurrence appears to be infrequent among the Kols. 845 787

The Sixth Day Ceremony: Chhatthi. After six days it is believed that the greatest period of danger is over and the woman can begin to make preparations to take up her normal life. This period corresponds with the time of greatest physical danger, for by the sixth day after birth, the dreaded septicaemia, if it is to come, will make its appearance. When day has come and all is well the *dhobi* and the *nai* are usually sent for. The former takes all the soiled clothes. The wife, after a preliminary bath and anointing by the *dai*, puts on fresh clothes. The barber trims the nails of her hands and feet and puts vermilion on both her feet and the feet of her child so that no evil spirit may harm them as they make their way to the place of the ceremonial bath. Her head has been oiled with *til* oil and occasionally the child has been pricked on the stomach with a hot iron, so that "the waters may be digested". All the earthen vessels in the house should be thrown out and new ones purchased from the Kumhar, and the house should be cleaned and plastered. The *nai* also gives the male members of the family a good shave, both of the face and the head. 846 [164] [302] [415] [302]

The mother is now ready for the ceremonial bath at the village bathing place. The women of the household go there in a group accompanied by a Basor beating a drum. This is done just at sundown. The mother carries a brass vessel (*lota*) on the top of which burns an earthenware lamp (*diya*). At the place of bathing offerings are made: cocoanut, *haldi*, *supari*. Incense may be sprinkled in the fire in the lamp. Mustard seed (*rai*) is often scattered about in order to frighten off any evil spirits which may be at the place ready to injure the mother and the child. There is then a formal sort of bath, the water being [354 415] [782] [789]

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a circle and all the time sang and beat time with their hands, the Chamar accompanying them with his drum. Several of the women took part in the digging of the earth and each girl was allowed but one blow with the pick. The earth thus displaced was gathered up with the mattock and put into the baskets. It was estimated that about thirty pounds were actually brought. The group then returned to the courtyard as slowly as they went but in the reverse order, with the lamp at the rear. The earth was then thrown in the centre of a small raised platform called the *mandil*, though occasionally the *mandil* is made later on from the earth brought in at this time. After the baskets were emptied the women brought water in small earthenware vessels and each threw water on the pile of earth until it was thoroughly soaked. The women then went to another part of the courtyard where each had left a bit of wheat which they brought from their homes when they first came. This was piled at another point and as each presented her wheat the mother dipped a bit of sweet oil from her household oil-jug and gave it to the other women. After this a small cone of cowdung, which is worshipped by unmarried girls, was set up on the *mandil*. See Figure 19. [237 778 589]

This earth should be sufficient to make either five or seven *chulhas* and they should be prepared sometime during that night. In Deosori they said that it would be done in the morning, and as it is done only by the women of the household it is likely that it was done after the people had departed. The party broke up at this point and from twenty to twenty-five women and young girls departed. This happened at 9 P.M. Occasionally there is a feast following the *mangarmati*, but there was none in this particular case. [574]

The next day the *chulhas* constructed from this earth should be ready for the preparation of the *lawa*, a mixture of parched paddy and millet, which is considered an indispensable part of the wedding preparations. During the time of its preparation there is joking and fooling. Before they can start to parch the rice one of the male members brings a young chicken and thrusts it into the lighted *chulha*. If the chicken does not catch fire and die (that is, if the *chulha* is not hot enough) it becomes the property of the male relative, but if it dies the women take it and make it into a curry. If the chicken catches fire no effort is made to save it. The parching of rice may now begin and this should be initiated by the man who brought the chicken. The same *chulha* which was used for the burning of the chicken should not be used for the subsequent parching. As the man commences his work some of his female relatives approach him and do all they can to disturb his work and irritate him. They may throw mud at him, abuse [584 952] [231] [578]

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roof is formed by bamboo branches covered with banana leaves. Around the upper edge of the *marhwa* is hung a frieze of mango twigs. Mango leaves are always found in connection with Kol weddings; they do not wither easily and are a symbol of everlastingness and stability. Strips of paper, usually coloured red, are used for decoration. The ground under the *marhwa* is carefully levelled and plastered with cowdung and in the very centre a hole twelve to eighteen inches deep is dug. This is where the central pole will be placed. Before the pole is lowered into position a *supari* nut (*Areca catechu*), some pieces of *haldi* (usually five) and two-pice coins are placed in the pit, and according to some accounts, rice coloured with *haldi* is also thrown in. The *magrohan* is a piece of wood three to four feet in length and two to four inches in diameter. It should preferably be green wood, though a dry pole is used if a fresh one is not available. It is coloured red with *sendur* or yellow with *haldi* and has some thread, coloured either white or yellow, wrapped about it seven times from the top to the bottom. Along with the *magrohan* a short green bamboo stick is fixed together with a green *gular* branch and the iron bar used in digging the holes for the booth. If the central post should be of *gular* or other wood a bit of *saleh* must be inserted with it. The *saleh* is a symbol of fertility, being an evergreen tree which never withers and takes root easily and quickly; even an apparently dry stick will sprout. After the *magrohan* has been put in place it is reverently circuited by the builders seven times in a clockwise direction and then *sendur* and cowdung are applied. The sacred pole stands at the centre of the wedding observances and at that time is surrounded by the articles now to be mentioned. Their position is indicated in figure 21 on the next page.

1. The *magrohan*.
2. A *kolso* (earthenware pot) filled with water. In the water there are mango leaves which are allowed to protrude at the top and over the top is placed a *dip* or earthenware lamp.
3. A *sil* (grinding stone) on which are placed the following articles noted in the sub-heads:
   a. A *lorha* (stone roller)—which the bridegroom will use to roll over the pice and disturb their arrangement;
   b. Husked rice, which is sprinkled over the surface of the *sil*.
   c. Seven pice coins which are laid in a row on top of the rice.
   d. Seven bits of wood, each a different kind.
   e. A whole *supari* nut.
   f. *Haldi* water is sprinkled over the whole.
4. A branch of *gular* or *palasa* (*Butea frondosa*) buried near the *magrohan*. In a crotch of the same will be inserted a small earthen pot containing *haldi*, *supari* nut and two pice.

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the *lota* belonging to the girl's mother and the others drop as much as they can afford into the *lotas* of the other women. During this time neither the bride nor the groom is present. 585

The *marhwa* must now be untied for it has served its purpose and both the bride and the groom are called for this, the groom being seated in his *palki* ready for his departure. There is singing and dancing around the *marhwa*. The boy leaves his *palki* and enters the girl's house and the two are again tied together and the boy crowned. They come out side by side and both get into the *palki* which is to carry the bridegroom to his home. The women of the house take a pice in their right hand and waving it over the couple give it to the bearers of the *palki*. The women perform the wave ceremony yet once again, but this time do not use money but instead a *supa* (winnowing fan), and all the time the drummer beats the drum vigorously. The *palki*, however, does not move off, as the knot must be untied and the girl gets out, for she is not yet ready to go to her husband. The girl disappears into her house and the women go in with her. The two groups of men move out toward the edge of the village and a short distance beyond they bid each other farewell ; thus comes the end of the second part of the wedding cycle.

The *marhwa* is taken down four to eight days after the *sadi*. It is torn down by the *swasa* who is helped by four or five men. The eight supporting poles are of no particular significance now and are usually thrown somewhere near the house where they are eventually used for fuel. The *magrohan* must be treated differently. Sometimes it is just left in the ground and grows into a tree, or if it should fail to do this it rots away. If it is removed, as is the usual procedure, it should not be carelesaly thrown aside. Sometimes it is kept in the house, but more frequently is carried by the women, who sing and chant as they go, to a near-by stream or tank where it is ceremonially thrown into the water. [237] Afterwards the area is plastered with cow dung to make the whole spick and span.

(4) *Gauna :* The Return of the Groom for his Bride. The third part of the marriage cycle is called the *gauna*, literally the going or moving. On this occasion the girl goes for the first time to the boy's home. Up till now she has not been alone with him, nor even talked to him in any confidential way. She knows nothing of the women-folk in the boy's house with whom she has to live for a time until she has a home of her own. The time lapsing between the *sadi* and the *gauna* depends upon the ages of the couple ; in certain cases where both have reached the age of puberty the *gauna* may immediately [591]

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585 follow the *sadi*, but more often a period of several years separates the two. The girl should be between ten and twelve and the boy between [582] twelve and fifteen before the *gauna* ceremony can be performed. The exact time depends upon the *pandit* and upon auspicious days and seasons.

When the time for the *gauna* has come a large party carrying the bridegroom in a *palki* leaves the boy's home much in the same manner as they departed for the *sadi*. The boy's party is once more welcomed but the ceremony is not quite so elaborate as it was before. On the second night the Brahmin may be called in, though not always, and the remaining two circumambulations (*bhanwars*) of the fire are made. This time, however, there is no *marhwa* nor *magrohan*. The place where the final ceremony is performed is simply plastered and [237] in the centre of the spot is set up a low mound made of cow dung; beside it is placed a *kachha kalsa* (an earthen pot not yet fired), on top of which is a brass plate containing (1) a *dip* burning with *ghi*, (2) *sendur* paste, and (3) a whole cocoanut. The couple are tied together as before and go round the fire twice, thus completing the seven rounds [574] in all. This makes the marriage *pakka* and the final ceremony is [533] followed by feasting, singing and dancing which last the rest of the [535] night.

Sometime during the next day the couple depart for the boy's home. They are tied together and seat themselves in the same *palki* which the bearers carry a few yards and then set down while the knot is untied and the bridegroom gets out leaving the *palki* for the bride. He either gets into another one or joins the party on foot. Just before this party, which now consists of the group that went with him, reinforced by men from the girl's home, arrives at the boy's house the *palki* is set down, the boy again gets into it, and the knot is once more tied. *Haldi* water is sprinkled over them and pice are waved over the bearers who are again presented with the coins. Upon arriving at the house the couple find a new cloth five yards long and a yard wide spread on the ground leading from the path to the door of the groom's house and at one end of this the *palki* is put down. As the bride is about to get out she is presented with a tray of balls made of water and whole wheat flour. At each step she must deposit one on the cloth at her feet. Her husband follows, for he is still tied to her and as he comes he must pick up the balls and put them into a small *thali* (tray). Inside the house the knot is untied for the last time. [262] From the *palki* the women bring a seer or two of uncooked rice along with a few other supplies including pulse, which the bride had brought with her in order that she might prepare a dish known as *khichri*, a

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in the family, but the wife is in no sense his slave and plays a large part in its control and management. All affairs are brought before the family for discussion and decision before final action is taken. If one party is not agreeable to a certain proposition the other tries by coaxing or by some other means to win his or her consent. Nevertheless this picture, given by the men, may be over bright, for it appears from close observation that the rights of the wives are much less than those of the men. She is not as free as the men are and it is not the custom for her to go here or there without hindrance. The woman has a certain amount of what might be called "personal property" and is not debarred from possessing it, though this is limited to her ornaments, her clothes and anything that she may make or acquire for her personal use. When the husband dies his property goes to the sons, but as long as she is living she must be supported by the sons. If there is no son, the property remains with her as long as she lives, but passes to the husband's male relatives at her death.

The Kol widow is not subjected to the same disabilities as are found among certain classes of Hindus. She is not required to shave her head, nor discard her metal bangles and ornaments, nor wear a white *sari*. If young she may marry again, usually not less than a year after her husband's death, and if she is elderly she may go to live with her son or relatives. Widows are expected to make some contribution for their keep and are often found searching for fuel or roots and leaves.

PLACE OF THE WIFE. After marriage the chief duties of the wife are to care for the house, prepare the meals and be a mother to her children. In between it is generally expected that she will find some means to supplement the family income, either by directly engaging in remunerative work, or by gathering roots and tubers from the jungle, cow dung from the roads and paths, or wood for the kitchen fire. Dried cow dung cakes are most generally used for the fire. She does the washing of clothes for herself and her children. Men wash their own clothes.

During her monthly courses there is some interruption of her regular work. During that time she may prepare her own food, but is not permitted to prepare food for another. The man must do his own cooking or make some other arrangements for the time being. There are other taboos at this time; she must never touch men's clothes nor should milk of any kind be touched by her. She may bring water from the well for her own use, but such water is taboo to any other member of the family.

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on a bed, if he is on one, as on the ground, but it is mostly affirmed that the ground is the place for the dying person. The body should be put there only when it is certain that the person is about to expire. The place where the body is laid should be first plastered with cow dung if that is possible. The head should be toward the north, that is, pointing towards the sacred Ganges, and the feet to the south, for it is in that direction that the soul has to go to the land of death. Most of the graveyards are to the south of Kol villages.

As soon as it is ascertained that the person is dead the fact of death is publicly proclaimed by loud lamentations set up by members of the family. The lamentations do not seem to be linked up with the frightening away of evil spirits but are essentially a natural expression of grief; although to an outsider they may seem to be overdone. The body should not remain within the house, but should be immediately removed to a place made ready for it on the veranda or the small courtyard in front of the house. There the body is laid upon the ground and is covered with a new white cloth. Nothing is done to the body in the way of measuring its length or the tying of its toes.[1]

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUNERAL. Immediate preparations are now begun for the funeral, which, under favourable circumstances should be underway within an hour or two. Friends prepare a bamboo sling (*tatari*), made of two long bamboo poles with a few crossbars. On this the body is placed and fastened. A wooden *charpai* (rope cot) may serve just as well, and if the death occurred on one, this is used. Such a *charpai* has to be discarded anyhow, and in this case it is abandoned at the place of disposal. It is, however, immediately taken possession of by a low caste Hindu—a Basor or a Domar.

Occasionally the body is washed with a bit of cold water at the house before being transported to the place of burial or cremation. The most common procedure, though, is that the body is not washed till the funeral grounds are reached.

If the person has died in the evening, too late for immediate disposal, the body may be kept upon the earth outside the house during the whole of the night. Friends and relatives sit round the body which is regarded with awe and sometimes fear. A lamp is kept burning so that no evil spirit may get possession of the corpse and enter it in the darkness. Nevertheless no efforts are made to tie the corpse

1 As soon as the body is laid out, some non-Kol groups measure its length and tie its big toes together in order to determine whether or not a live spirit has gained entrance to the body during the period between death and its removal to the cemetery. If a spirit has entered, the body will elongate and the thread about the toes will be broken.

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any kind of wood may be used, but some more Hindnized groups say that *chandan* (sandalwood—*Santalum album*) is preferred. They may buy seven small bits of it which they place over the seven important points of the body, which may be then considered as covered with *chandan* wood. In building the pyre no trench is usually constructed, but a good base is built up and the body laid on the pyre in the same manner as in the grave, head north, feet south; in the case of a man face downwards and for a woman face upwards. More wood is piled on top and the pyre is ready for ignition.

Lighting the Pyre. The fire is brought in an earthen vessel from the home of the deceased and is usually preserved by the use of burning cow dung cakes. It is the duty of the chief mourner to light the funeral pyre. If the deceased is a father or mother the eldest son, if he is of age, lights the fire. If the deceased is a son or daughter the father lights the pyre. If there is no parent, the eldest and closest male relative lights it. The chief mourner takes a torch lighted from the cow dung cakes and keeping the body to his right walks about the pyre seven times. At each round he touches the head with the burning torch. After the seventh time the torch is thrown into the pyre. After that others may also light various parts of the pyre.

It will be noted that so far the Hindu priest has not been called upon. Ordinarily he has no place in Kol funeral ceremonies. He is only utilized on the fairly rare occasions when Kols take the ashes to the river where they are thrown in ceremonially. In due course there follows a description of such ceremonies. But there is always a low caste Hindu present, usually from the Basor or Domar group in the case of the Kols, who collects the cast-off things—*charpai*, clothes, and the pice that may be left at the burning place or grave. Later he is given gifts at the house and has his part in the funeral feast.

Gathering the Ashes—Khari or *Rakhi.* Moving ahead, in order to keep the cremation account intact, it is found that on the third day after the cremation a party should return to the *murdyaghat* to collect the ashes. Some milk is first sprinkled, then the bones which are unburnt are collected. The chief mourner picks up the first pieces. This is done with the left hand and the pieces deposited in either a new cloth bag or a new *ghara.* Usually only the men pick up the bits of bones, but on occasions the women may assist. The pieces are kept in a suitable place for later disposal. The sooner this can be done the better; but as quick disposal is not always possible they are brought back from the *ghat* to the village. The ashes are never brought within

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718 411 [785 787] are very common. The trident with the sharp point is used at the time the *panda* or another is possessed of Khermai, and is pierced through the tongue or cheek.

3. *Spiked Sandals* (*Kharau*). Every well-equipped shrine should 718 787 292 have at least one pair of spiked sandals. These are made of pieces of wood in the shape of the sole of a shoe with sharp spikes driven through so that the person walking on them stands on the points. There is a wooden peg toward the front of each which fits between the big toe and the next and holds the sandal on the foot. These are generally used at the time of the trance. When the spirit of Kalimai possesses a man, it will be evidenced by his desire to put on these sandals and jump about in them.

4. *Iron Tongs* (*Chimta*). There is also another kind of iron 778 785 787 [412] instrument found in these shrines: iron tongs used for taking coals out of the fire. When Sannyasi *dso* comes upon a man he will take the tongs and beat himself with them. Hindu ascetics usually carry tongs.

5. *Iron Lash* (*Gurda*). This is a sort of magic chain made of iron links barbed with bits of steel. The handle by which it is grasped is also iron. During the *bawa*, if one is possessed (particularly by Bhuiyan *deo*), he will pick up this chain and lash himself till the blood comes. If some person, possessed of an evil spirit, is brought before the shrine, and the *panda* in his trance recognizes the reality of the spirit possession, he will attempt to cast out the spirit by lashing the unfortunate man.

6. *Iron Nails*. Some bits of iron or iron nails are usually found somewhere about the shrine. These serve a dual purpose: they are tests for Khermai, and one possessed of her can stick them into his flesh without pain or discomfort. They are also used to frighten away evil spirits who may make a disturbance, and are sometimes flung in their direction causing them to fly away.

7. *A Bed of Spikes* (*Palna*). Often a bed of spikes is found in connection with these shrines. This too is to test spirit possession. 778 One possessed of Kali will seek to use the bed of spikes.

8. *A Ram's Horn* is sometimes found. It is lucky to have one [777] ● 237 and it protects the shrine.

9. *Clay Lamps* (*Dip*). Clay dishes into which oil is poured and [354] wicks attached are also found at all shrines. Sweet oil and incense are mixed, and during the time of worship two or three of these are lighted and kept burning. The *panda* lights and cares for them.

10. *Ashes* (*Rakha*). A pile of ashes is always found somewhere [789] about the shrine. This is a good protective device against evil spirits.

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in this way, all is well; but if they get angry, they will trouble the people who have neglected them. 778 782

THE HOME SHRINE. Shrines found at the homes are much simpler than the village shrines and are found either inside or just outside the house, or in both places. Those outside the house are placed in the front wall facing the courtyard, and the wall of the house is a part of the shrine. Sometimes a little hole is made in the wall to shelter the *devi* when it rains. These shrines may be dedicated to any of the *devis* mentioned in the preceding pages—Asmanimai, Kalimai, Khermai, Marimai and Shardamai being the most commonly worshipped outside the house. One finds flags above, and also below; the iron trident; black and other kinds of bangles; a *salagrama* stone; *sendur* marks and the like. Iron lashes and strings of beads are not uncommon. 778

The place reserved within the dwelling for the household goddess, or god is even simpler. There is a niche in the wall from four to six inches above the floor. Within the niche is found a *salagrama* stone [386] or some iron symbol reddened with *sendur*. Vermilion is also daubed on the wall round the niche. The floor space immediately below the [237] deity is plastered with cowdung. A small trident usually leans against the wall at one side of the shrine; there is a *dip* which is [782] lighted at dusk, when the women of the house prostrate themselves before the shrine. As was noted, both kinds of shrines are usually found. If the house is just a hut of branches, and there is no earthen wall, symbols of the deities will be found on the floor in one of the corners. The house shrine is generally called *dewahar* or *dewala*.

DEVI POSSESSION. (*Bawa*). The phenomenon of spirit possession 787 is fairly common among certain of the lower classes. The Kols also practise this. The trance occurs before the village shrine and is usually induced only at the time of the *Jawara* festivals, which come at the spring and autumnal equinox. It may be resorted to on other occasions if there seems to be a case of extreme necessity. The actual [533] trance is induced partly by the singing and the beating of drums, at which Kols are so adept. The person seeking the *bawa* takes his place before the *devi* and after a period of concentration and emotion begins to tremble, then shout, beat himself upon the ground, and becomes in appearance a totally different person. During this time he will answer questions put to him by persons seeking guidance, who believe that it is not he that is answering them, but the spirit at that time resident in him. During [151] this period, the one under the possession of the *devi* is practically insen-

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796 successful the ceremony. Last of all the whole is covered with a layer of dry grass.

[177 793] The time for the actual lighting is learned from the Hindu *pandit* who knows horoscopy and can tell it exactly. Theoretically the pile should be lighted at full moon, when the sun and the moon are exactly [821] in opposition. This may occur before sunset, and if so, the pile should be lighted as soon as dusk has fallen. It was to be lighted in the case we investigated at 3 a.m. When the hour has come, all who take [522] part in the festivities gather round the sacred pile with much laughing and vulgar jesting. A cocoanut is usually broken just as the fire is touched off. The fire is lit from burning cow dung cakes; and before ● [237 372] touched off, it is carried by the *panda* seven times around the pile which is always kept to his right, so that he goes clockwise about it. The glowing cow dung cakes are then inserted into the wood and grass drawn over it, and the fire begins. One should never blow upon this fire to get it started. It should be fanned, but never blown from the mouth. Now the whole group will circumambulate the fire in a clockwise direction, throwing wheat or other gifts into it. Later on, as the fire dies down, some daring youths may jump over it or run through it. As the group goes about the fire, they shout: "*Hori ha, Hori mata*, take thou this wheat our *Hori mata*." *Hori* is used for *Holi*. Singing is kept up all night, and more wood may be thrown upon the fire.

796 With the lighting of the fire, the obscenity of this festival is loosened, and may be resorted to all night and the next day. Obscene 786 songs of the *Kabiri* type in which the sexual act is described with 831 appropriate gestures are sung. These are not directed against any particular individual, and no offense should be taken by anyone. A woman may snatch away a bit of the clothes of a man known to her, such as his cap or *pagri* or cloth flung over his shoulder. He must give her a present before he can recover it, and the hat should be filled with *gur* (raw sugar) and sweets before he can get it back. Sexual license is permitted at this time.

[787] Certain prophecies about the coming harvest are made by observing the way the fire burns, the smoke rises, and how it is carried away by the wind.

On the day following liberties of all kinds are taken with people. Dust, mud, dirt, and water coloured red, are thrown over passers-by. Sugar garlands are exchanged and indecent remarks passed. *Kabiri* [533] songs and others celebrating Krishna's love affairs are sung. The more shameless a lowcaste man can be, the more lustily he is cheered by his companions. There is no redress for those insulted on this

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776 754 493 that several men had already lost their lives, and others had been injured because they failed to show deference. At any time of the day one who passes this place should get off his cycle, stop, ask permission of the spirit to pass by, then walk with his cycle and mount it again a few paces beyond.

789 PROTECTIVE MEASURES. Various kinds of devices are used by Kols to ward off the power and effectiveness of the evil eye and the spirit world. The protective remedies commonly employed are listed alphabetically.

[195 533 585] *Abuse.* The abusive language and songs generally used at the time of the wedding have a prophylactic value. There is somehow resident in *gali* a power which protects the bride and groom from evil influences.

789 312 *Ashes* are commonly employed both on religious and social occasions. Immediately after birth the new-born babe is dusted with ashes. They are also scattered over the place of birth, lest the spirits get a portion of the afterbirth and use it against the child and the family. A magic circle of ashes is put around the bed of the mother and her new-born child. When the *nara*, the stump of the umbilical cord, falls off, it is buried in the floor of the house, and a fire which is kept burning over the spot constantly supplies fresh ashes.

[844]

Ashes are kept in shrines to frighten evil spirits away. A portion thrown into the air from time to time will be effective in doing this. [775] A fleck of ashes in a child's mouth after feeding with milk keep *bhuts*, who are passionately fond of milk, at a safe distance from the child. [237] The ashes from burnt cow dung cakes are especially useful as are the ashes of wood from the *bel* tree.

789 301 *Bangles* are a protection. The glass types are mostly decorative, but their colours are efficacious as certain colours repel demons. Kols believe that metal bangles are the most effective, particularly the copper and iron types. As *bhuts* may enter through the feet or hands, bangles on the wrists and ankles prevent that way of entry. [775]

Beads about the neck of children are particularly defensive against the evil eye. They should be of bright colours and the Kols most often use a type made from lac. Blue beads about the necks of cattle help to protect them from the evil eye and all valuable animals should be so guarded. A unique charm noted in this connection, though not among the Kols, was that of old bicycle chains fastened about the necks of cattle. [802]

789 776 372 *Charcoal*, because it is a form of ash and black in colour, is a devil-scarer. Mixed with milk and wine and spread in a circle, it

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789 *Iron* is, on the whole, probably the most common of protective metals;
823 and while some put copper above iron, nevertheless in the case of the Kols, iron appears to be more widely used than copper. The use of iron takes many forms. A woman should always have a bit of iron about her as she is usually exposed to evil influences more than are the men folk. This may take the form of a bracelet, an anklet, a ring on the finger, or an iron ring about the neck. Again it may be just a piece of the metal tied somewhere in the garments or on a string about the waist.
[755] A sick man should always have iron about him to prevent further demonic influences during his period of helplessness. An iron key is a protective and even nails in shoes are useful in this respect. A piece of iron
[513] ought to be under the head as one sleeps and iron nails are often driven into the four corners of a wooden cot should the Kol sleep on one. In the case of children iron helps to repel the evil eye. At the wedding
[585] time the bridegroom carries iron about with him, and iron is found in the wedding booth.

Iron protects houses from the entry of evil spirits and makes their habitation there impossible. Therefore, when a house is built
[342] iron is buried under the floor, particularly near the threshold. Even though unseen by the human eye it will influence the demons and they fear to enter and abide in the house. Perhaps *bhuts* are thought
[775] of as still living in the stone age and dreading the new-fangled iron and its power to break the strongest things of which they know.

789 *Lac*, obtained from the gum of the *Khairwar* tree (*Acacia catechu*),
[314] and prepared in the form of bangles and beads, averts the evil eye and wards off spirits. This is variously coloured.

Lampblack is widely used for children and protects them from
[751] the evil eye. While it disguises them and renders them less attractive, it also has the practical purpose of protecting the eye from the glare of the sun. The lampblack, mixed with oil to make a paste, is placed just below the eyes and often gives the child a weird and unnatural appearance.

789 *Leather* is a very common devil-scarer throughout India and has
●237 its uses for the Kols, such as the custom of employing it in connection with the building of houses. For protection, in this instance, an old
291 shoe will generally be found stuck somewhere about the wall which is being built. This is apparent in the picture appearing in connection with building customs.[1] If they can be afforded, leather shoes with nails in them are a double protection, and no Kol goes on a long journey with-
[484] out taking a pair of country shoes with him even though he seldom uses them. He will carry them hanging from a stick or in his hands.

1 See plate VIII.

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dipped into the water and the solution is then taken. Following the taking of the *gurj* solution a lemon is cut in half and salted and peppered. The two halves are left on the roof over-night and should be sucked the next morning. Another report is that a good remedy for malaria is to grind together *golmirich* (black pepper), *long* (cloves), and *mitha lakri* (licorice). The paste is put into a bit of water and swallowed

Pain in the abdomen : this is relieved by rubbing a mixture of kerosene and mustard oil over the affected part.

Smallpox : there is no remedy for this, as it is due to a goddess and her will, but care should be taken that the patient takes only light foods during this period.

Snake bites : one should chew leaves of the *nim* tree. Crooke notes that "in Ahmednagar when a man is bitten by a snake he is taken to Bahiroba's temple, crushed Nim leaves mixed with chillies are administered, and the branches are waved over his head."[1]

Stomach trouble : for this the leaves of the *Babul* tree, (*Acacia arabica*) should be chewed and eaten.

Swellings : if it be the thighs that have swelled, *ghi* should be applied and rubbed in well. At the same time *Hing* paste (a variety of asafetida) should be applied to the nails of the leg affected.

Wounds : *chuna* (lime) is mixed with the juice of the *Kattha* tree (*Acacia catechu*) and the paste applied. The juice of this tree has good astringent qualities.

Fresh cow dung is very commonly applied, especially to the wounds of children.

The bark of the *Tinsa* tree (*Eugenia dalbergioides*) is ground into a paste and stops the bleeding from a wound.

For the wounds made by thrusting the iron trident through the tongue or cheek at the *jawara* season, the following mixture should be applied : Lime juice, some ground onion, *ghi*, wood ashes and *pan* leaves (*Piper betel*).

It is usual that each village has its *baid* or medicine man who suggests these simple remedies and advises what should be done. However, there may be no such person in the village, and even if there is such, the Kols have great faith in the Baiga, and may go to him.

1 Crooke, W., *Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, p. 410.

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648 Kols, Baigas and Gonds live in close association under village condi-
756 tions. The Baiga priest is revered by both Kols and Gonds, and it is
755 asserted that he has a *deva* living within him which gives him insight as to what should be done. The Baiga, however, is more interested in the occult than he is in prescribing remedies, and if he believes the illness is due to a spirit, he performs over the ill person the *supa* ceremony. It is said that he takes a *supa* (winnowing fan) and places on it a little lamp (*diya*), *ghi* being used to make it burn. The Baiga sits before this and begins to mumble *mantras* and to concentrate on the fire. He calls the *devi* or *deva* when he feels that the time is ripe. When the *devi* arrives, the Baiga falls down in a trance, for the spirit has full possession of him and speaks through him to the people present, telling them just what they must do. This usually takes the form of the demand for some offering to be made either to the goddess speaking through the Baiga or to some other deity named by her, generally an animal: a chicken, goat or pig. As soon as the trance is over, the members of the household begin to take steps to fulfil the words spoken through the Baiga, for the man should start to mend as soon as the offerings are accomplished. If nothing is done, the *devi* will be angry, and the patient is almost sure to die. Should the man die in spite of the offerings, it is said that something was probably wrong with them and the *devi* was not pleased. This ceremony is termed by the Kols *totak vidha*, and requires the winnowing fan, the lamp burning in an earthen vessel, and the presence of the deity. For this service the Baiga charges a fee depending upon the capacity of the family to pay. The fee is decided on by the Baiga after careful inquiry and is said usually to be high. If it should not be paid, the *devi* is angered and the man may die. Sometimes, they say, the ceremony puts them in debt, hence they may hesitate to call in a Baiga.

755 Another form of the *supa* ceremony is this: the person from
[516] whom a spirit or a disease is to be cast is told to sit cross-legged on
[823] the ground, facing east. Those who cure come from that holy direction, made holy because the sun rises from there. Water is sprinkled on the *supa* cleansing it. The person is then fanned by the sorcerer, first from the front and then from the back. As he does this he repeats certain *mantras* supposed to be efficacious in driving evil away. The man is asked to move a few feet away from the *supa* lest it be not exactly the right spot, and the process is repeated.

[237] The sickle is often used in casting out spirits and diseases. The person is asked to sit facing the east. Ashes from burnt cow dung are blown over him from the hand of the Baiga, and then the sickle is waved over and about his head. This will drive the demons away.

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[23] [825]

one's bodyguard. On the whole the dogs of an Indian village are a miserable lot and are a menace to the health of the people.

The tiger is another animal reverenced by Indian peasants and is very prominent in their folk belief, especially in areas where tigers roam. This is also shared by the Kols and as a jungle people they reverence him. A Kol should never take part in a beat to track down a tiger. If one should be met in the forest he should be addressed very respectfully. [789] Certain parts of the tiger are useful as powerful charms. The whiskers, teeth and claws are prophylactics against the evil eye. [262] To eat his flesh, particularly his heart, gives one the disposition of a tiger. To see a dead tiger is bad luck as his spirit may later harm the person observing him. [777] If worshipped as Baghdeo[1] the tiger will not injure any one he meets in the forest nor molest the cattle. There is a story current among the Kols that in the distant past a tiger was born out of a Kol. [773] During the years that followed they lived together peacefully in the forest, but after a time the tiger began to trouble Kols so that a separation was deemed advisable and since that time they have lived apart.[2]

The serpent is both feared and reverenced by Kols. It is usually the cobra which is adored, although Kols treat all serpents with respect. However, it is considered no great sin to slay a cobra, but it must not be done unless the cobra is stubborn and shows fight, particularly when in the house. If a cobra, or any other snake is found in a dwelling house it is addressed respectfully as *maharaj* and asked politely to leave. It may be helped out with a little judicious poking with a stick. If it goes out readily it is helped on its way and if all goes well is not molested further. If, however, the *nag* shows fight and does not appear willing to leave the house or courtyard it may be beaten and killed and its body burned. [782] An offering should be made to its spirit after such an occasion. At the time of the festival of Nagpanchami[3] milk is set out for snakes, [796] a common practice all over Central India.

The horse is an animal with which Rautiya Kols do not have much to do; as a rule they will not touch one, and its dung is absolutely taboo. [23] [237] Some of their traditions concerning horses are recorded on previous pages.[4]

The sacrificial animals are the chicken, goat, pig and sheep. [782]

We could not find out much concerning the Kol idea of birds.

1 See pages 141-142.
2 See pages 41-42.
3 See pages 171-172.
4 See pages 34-35; also Chapter X.